WORLD PARISH

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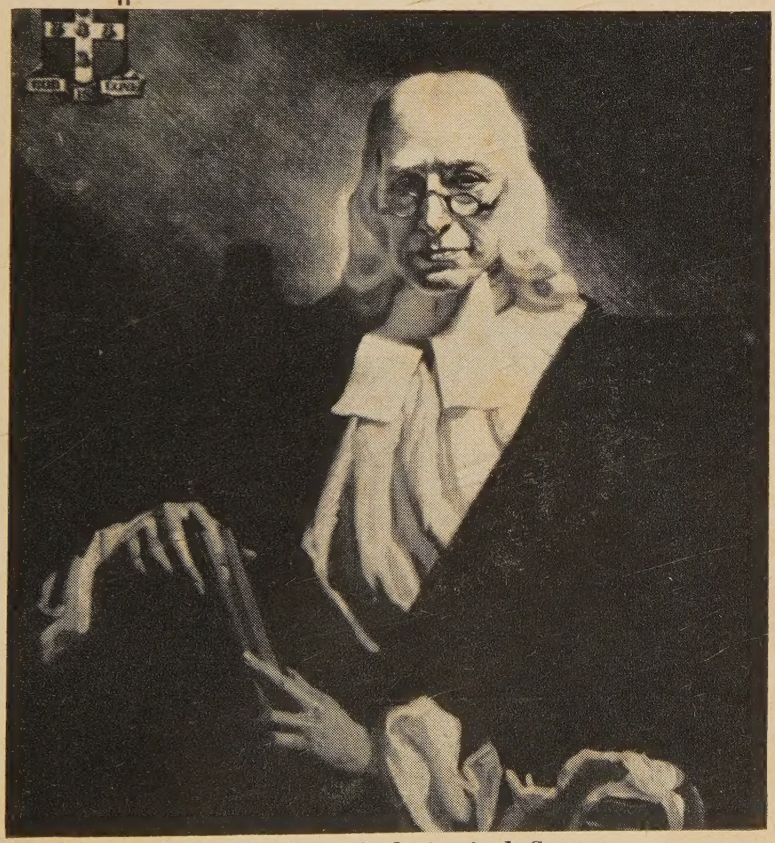

John Wesley, Ecclesiastical Statesman
by Frank O. Salisbury

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THE METHODISTS ARE ONE

The remarkable response of the Methodists of the world to the call to evangelism issued at Oxford proves that our famous phrase, "the Methodists are one people in all the world," is a living reality. Elsewhere in this bulletin will be found reports which show that the churches in many lands have taken up the Oxford challenge and are preparing to make 1953 a year of evangelism.

This has some important implications, one of which is that it points to a larger unity than we have yet been able to achieve. Though there are many superficial differences between the various branches of the world church, we have always been united in affection, fellowship and faith. But never before have all Methodists joined in a definite program of cooperative work. From this we may go on step by step until all the fragments have been brought together. The Methodists have always been the leaders in espousing Christian unity, but have given little or no thought to the healing of their own disunity, nor in ecumenical discussions have they seemed to notice the incongruity.

It is significant that this new type of unity has been brought about by an emphasis on evangelism. This is our primal motive, our first love, the basic cause of our creation in the first place. It is doubtful whether our diverse peoples would have rallied so readily, and without fuss or objections worth mentioning, around any other principle. We have probably not drifted so far from our origins as some amongst us have thought.

The response to the call of Oxford has established the World Methodist Council on a firm and permanent basis. At least this is our hope. In perfecting the new form of organization and providing for a Permanent Secretariat in America and Great Britain it was the apparent purpose to establish the Council as an influential agency in Methodist and ecumenical affairs. Both Secretaries have detached themselves from other duties and are devoting their full time to the development of the program outlined at Oxford. The Secretary in the United States will maintain contacts primarily with Methodism in the Americas,

including the West Indies, while the Secretary in England will maintain contacts with the other Sections.

During the current period it is hoped that the basis may be laid for a much larger program of work than can be immediately put into operation. In view of budgetary limitations the World Methodist Council cannot at once become a fully developed agency, though progress will undoubtedly be made. Efforts will be directed towards stimulating and securing the cooperation of other agencies to carry out its policies.

In the evangelistic movement there has been notable success at this point. Projected at Oxford and directed by the officers and committees of the World Methodist Council, the movement everywhere has been taken over by the whole church. In the United States, for example, it was taken up by the General Conference, which not only set up a special committee to direct the campaign but especially instructed the bishops and all the boards and agencies of the church to cooperate in its promotion. This is the type of service in which the Council will find its greatest usefulness.

STATEMENT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

On the Report of the Advisory Commission on the Theme of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held at Evanston in 1954.

All of us are greatly pleased at the prospect of having the second Assembly of the WCC meet in America in 1954. It will be the first ecumenical gathering of this proportion ever held there and it will be before the attention of the American churches as few, if any, ecumenical meetings have ever been. It will meet at a time when it is quite conceivable that the world tensions may be even more menacing than now. In any case, it will be a critical moment, when the hopes and fears of the churches and the world will be deeply stirred. We are more than content that the Assembly address itself to the theme of the Christian hope in Jesus Christ. But, by the same token, we are very much concerned that the Assembly really arouse and found our hope in Christ, inspire and direct us to new levels of prophetic faithfulness and speak to the people in the churches, and outside, in language and categories that are both biblical and contemporary at one and the same time. Else we fear that Evanston might fall into a massive anti-climax.

We have read and studied the first report of the Advisory Commission on the theme of the Assembly and we are not satisfied with it. We recognize that it is only a first draft and that it is "the opening of a conversation" about the message of Evanston. Nevertheless, such tenta-

tive beginnings often have a way of acquiring an invested character and we are interested in making some critical and constructive comment on it while the preparation of the program is still plastic and open.

To begin with, we are not satisfied with the tone and language of the report. We are not disposed to reject the main affirmation or the general contentions of the paper but we are not prepared to approve the dominant tone of pessimism or the wholesale consignment of history to the powers of evil and decay. It is one thing to reject all human pride of achievement and pretensions to autonomy while proclaiming the redemptive power of the life of faith and grace. But it is another thing to imply that historical existence being finite and subject to death and sin, is therefore without significant meaning or value in this present time, and depends solely on what meaning will be given it in the *future* Victory of Christ as Judge and Saviour. There are sentences throughout the paper which speak of present hope but the general orientation of the Christian hope is here a futuristic one. In America, we are familiar with many rather bizarre forms of futuristic eschatology and we know that the Commission has no intention of giving aid to any kind of biblical literalism of this sort. But the biblical texts in the report are too often quoted without enough exegesis to differentiate this view from that of the millenarian literalism on the one hand, nor does it succeed in translating them into modern terms, on the other. Eschatology, we believe, ought to enrich our present joy in the Lord and ought to be connected with the Christian assurance of His Lordship in the Witness of the Spirit (which has always been a cherished and meaningful biblical doctrine among us).

In the second place, we note with some surprise certain omissions in the report, which ought surely to be remedied before the agenda for Evanston is completed. There is, first, no *explicit* recognition and analysis of the alternative great hopes which clamour for men's loyalties in the modern world. There are, for instance, the hopes of *the religious humanist* (secular democratic hopes, "the creed of democracy," the social and psychological panaceas and promises, and myriad versions of religious naturalism). We see this secularism as a great and very powerful rival to duty in our Western societies everywhere. There is also Communism, which is the hope of the world for millions. If Christ *is* our hope and our only hope, in declaring our hope in Him, we must undertake the hard task of comparing and contrasting the Christian hope and the hopes of secular man. Thus, the assertion that the Lordship of Christ is "the hope of the World" (p. 10) does not suffice to light up and resolve our most seriously developed tensions and conflicts. Another omission has to do with the Christian answer to death's negation of life. If "all life is under the shadow of death," then the destiny of *individuals* is a matter of utmost moment in the Christian hope and cannot be subordinated to an eschatological emphasis that settles the question of destiny without particular attention to the ques-

tions of immortality and resurrection. "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" is the Nicene faith and we do not think the report adequately cares for the anxiety and threat to faith which modern man finds in the fact of death as the radical negation of life's meaning. There are, we believe, "rules" for living and dying in the Lord and these are indispensable to the Christian hope. Finally, we believe there are many "lesser hopes" which men may here and now entertain as they labour in the Lord, in legitimate assurance of God's grace and favour. These are neither noticed nor commended to the readers of this report.

There is a third dissatisfaction we feel about the report and we may note several items here rather than comment on them extensively:

In the New Testament, we believe, hope is regularly associated with *faith,* on the one hand, and *love,* on the other. And none of these three are *primarily* futuristic, although all look toward and share in the coming *Parousia.* We observe an ambiguity, therefore, in the report's treatment of the relation of Christian hope and time. Hope, as we experience it, is a quality of the *living moment,* and into this moment feed the memories of the past and the expectations of the future; it is the living process in which faith has been born, God's love has been experienced and human love enlarged. Christian hope rests back on the Christian faith in God's constant, unwearied work of creation and redemption and it looks forward to God's finishing of this new creation. Christian hope is founded on our faith in God's control of time and His transcendance of the time series. Thus the Christian hope springs from our confession and proclamation of the unique and decisive—and *past* —*Event* of the Incarnation (the *life* and *teachings,* the passion and death, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ), our experience of the witness of the Spirit and participation in His gifts, and our confidence that God, who has given us such tokens of His love, does not intend in His judgment merely to condemn the world but to redeem it. Now, the report uses *tenses* in a rather baffling way. It alternated between future and present in such a fashion as to leave no clear relation between the "eschatological future" and the present Lordship of Christ in history. We hope that the Commission will attend to this problem most seriously, and clarify the as yet undeveloped concept of our Christian responsibility for present action.

There is a second level of this same ambiguity about time and hope. The report uses the eschatological language of the New Testament and applies it to our historical epoch without explaining the difference that the intervening centuries make in this sort of interpretation. The primitive New Testament eschatology minimizes history and expects its imminent and actual end in the very near future. Christ's victory has begun and the judgment is very near in time—and will begin with the house of God! But it actually turned out that history lengthened out into the long future and the Christians found themselves with the prob-

lem of the failure of their expectations. Both St. Paul and St. John faced this problem, in very different ways—and this report seems to have ignored the Johannine solution. It is a fact of the first significance that the early Christians' proclamation, ethic or liturgy did not depend on an imminent or literal second Advent. Their faith in God as continuing Creator, in Christ as Crucified and Risen Lord, in the Holy Spirit as the personal immanence of God's *dynamis* and *exousia* in the Church, gave them a solid basis for hope in God's future in the light of His present and past manifestations of Lordship (1 Cor. 8:6). Thus the eschaton could be shifted from the time-series to the realm of God's time—and the way opened for the genuinely new creation of a Christian philosophy of history.

It is the past Event of Christ which is our first and main ground of hope—as it is the ground of faith and love. The future victory is not to be disjoined from our present access of God's wisdom and power in the Gospel to them that believe.

A third ambiguity in the report strikes us as literally incomprehensible. It is the uncertainty as to whether the title should speak of Christ as Crucified or Crucified and Risen. We cannot understand why there should be any uncertainty here whatsoever. The crucifixion makes no sense with the resurrection—certainly no saving sense. Without the resurrection, the crucifixion would have been another Jewish martyrdom, another Roman execution. It was the resurrection which turned the defeat of the Cross into the Victory of God—and which set the Christian church on its way. And, always, even the barest outline of the *kerygma* includes the resurrection as decisive. The Apostles were "witnesses to the resurrection"; this was St. Paul's constant bicker with the Pharisees. The decisive passage in 1 Cor. 15 connects faith and hope—and Christian labour—inseparably with the Risen Christ. And there is that wonderful passage in Romans 4 connecting the resurrection with the crucifixion, in a soteriological bond. "He died for our sins and was raised for our justification." The Cross adorns our churches, but the Church itself is the witness to the Risen Lord.

We are pleased to see a resolute effort in the report to relate our hope in Christ to both the world's tragedy and the church's sickness. But we are not content with the line of proposed analysis, and this in part because it is not clear. The hope of the Church is in Jesus Christ, her Lord. Wherein lies the world's hope? In Christ? But how, and what in relation to the life and faith of the Church? Sections B and C do not seem to be operating from a single premise here. Is the hope of the world that the Church may so witness to Christ's Lordship as to draw all peoples unto Him? Is, then, the Church the penultimate hope of the world—or what?

Finally, we are not at all satisfied that the theological perspective of the report is adequately Trinitarian. The recovery of a Christocentric focus is welcome and wholesome—but it ought not to involve a neglect

of the Creator-Father and the Holy Spirit as equal "personae" of the *One, Living God.* And yet the pessimism of the report seems to reflect a sub-Christian notion of the *goodness of creation* and the meaning and value of history. Similarly, the ecclesiology of the report is not anywhere explicitly related to the Holy Spirit who is the life of the *koinonia.* The Trinity is the first principle of all eschatology.

It seems to us significant that in the New Testament, the discussions of eschatology is closely associated with Christian *morale* and ethics. The concrete questions are: What about our Christian dead; what about our Christian idlers? what about "eternal" Rome and her enmity toward the Christians; what about the destruction of Jerusalem, etc., etc.? So, too, in these days, we are faced with the problem of Christian *morale* and faithfulness. Do we and our people really know that our present labours are not in vain in the Lord? (1 Cor. 15) Any real answer to this question will have to *combine* an existentialist eschatology (present, living decision-in-hope) with a futuristic one.

It is clear that the Commission wishes to exclude and deplore all "liberal" optimism, and the pride of what man has done and can do to manage his affairs here and his destiny hereafter. But their zeal has betrayed them into a thinning out of the *positive* hope and joy and victory which seem to us a constitutive part of the Christian life. We acknowledge that we have been sometimes too preoccupied with history's *ongoing,* and, perhaps, with the domestication of the Kingdom of God. But this fault is not to be remedied by an equally narrow preoccupation with history's *ending.* The tasks of eschatology are positive and present to provide the vertical dimension of faith, hope and love and to charge them with an urgency which generates a prophetic ministry in the church and through the church. Evanston will have to be more specific and thorough-going in its drawing out the concrete implications of the Christian hope for the Christian life.

The Christian hope ought to nerve us for the catastrophes some of us have already had thrust upon us and some of us may have to face in the future, soon or late. But it is morbid to mobilize only for catastrophe. The Christian hope ought also to inspire us for sacrificial action in *whatever* future God may have for us. The persecuted churches have their hope in Christ—by becoming the *koinonia* of those whose sufferings are not endured in bitterness or despair but in *faith* and *love.* The sick churches have *their* hope in Christ—by becoming faithful hearers and doers of the World of repentance and reconciliation. The comfortable churches have their hope in Christ—by confessing Christ's negation of all reliance on the abundance of material possession. All—in every condition—must drink the cup of suffering and must fill the cup of service.

Christ is our hope, but He sets us to tasks which are properly *our* tasks—and these cannot be done meagerly because of an escapist expectation of a future event in which God will make good, what He

has made us responsible for here and *now*. Eschatology means, perhaps first of all, the judgment of God on our present acts of faith, hope and love. Thus Evanston must draw out the great ethical and vocational import of our hope in Christ. There are the tasks of evangelism and Christian *paideusis;* there is the hallowing of life in worship and sacrament; there is the challenge to Christian vocation, in the ministry and in all productive callings; there is the Christian permanent revolution which assumes the precarious and dynamic character of history but seeks to shape it after our Lord's commands and example. To wait for the Lord's appearing means for us to be about His business while time lasts and history rolls out. And in this connection we welcome the proposal that five out of six auxiliary sections at Evanston will be discussing the practical, concrete tasks of present Christian action.

We profoundly hope that Evanston will find the Christian voice of authentic hope and confidence, one which is neither cheap nor morbid. It ought so to speak that the people might hear and turn and enter into the door of hope which Christ has opened for us through His present Lordship. It ought to have a strong, honest world of comfort, and consolation to those who bury their dead—or walk themselves in the shadow of death. It must offer a heartening word to the persecuted churches; it must offer an inviting word to the "latent church" outside the churches; it must provide a challenging word to high-hearted youth; it ought to find something better than scorn for the humble and nameless church-goers for whom duty is a *je ne sais-quoi* but still in general a "good thing." In sum, Evanston must speak hopefully of hope in Christ, speaking the truth in love, and testing love by brotherhood (1 John 4). We are confident that the Commission will join us in these concerns—and will continue to seek the Spirit's leadership to find the right ways to weave together all the legitimate chords of contemporary eschatological thought into a Christian song of triumph, whether in life and in death, because of our Lord's Victory in which we share even now, in *some* measure, and which we will receive in fullest measure when faith and hope and love abide alone, and God is all in All.

By the Representatives of The Methodist Church, U.S.A., at the Conference on Faith and Order at Lund, Sweden, 1952.

SIGNED BY:

Ivan Lee Holt, *Chairman*
Oscar Thomas Olson, *Secretary*
W. A. Smart
Albert C. Outler
Robert E. Cushman
Walter G. Muelder
Georgia Harkness
William R. Cannon (*Representative of the World Methodist Council*)

A CALL TO BRITISH METHODISM

Some Extracts from the Address of the President, the Rev. Colin Roberts, to the British Methodist Conference.

In this hour, when loss of faith, moral decay, and spiritual apathy are so evident, it is surely profoundly significant that a call from Oxford has been sounded to thirty million Methodists in all parts of the world by their chosen representatives gathered together in fellowship. Its origin is more important than its content. If it was simply the call of man, eager to be up and doing, we should do well to dismiss it as pretentious, untimely, and impossible. If it was the call of God, and "the travail of our spirit was the travail of His own," then our response must be made to Him.

Seventy-five years ago, in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, it was proposed that the Methodists of the world should meet together from time to time. Among the reasons prompting that proposal was the desire "to increase the moral and evangelistic power of common Methodism and to secure a more speedy conversion of the world." The first such Conference met in Wesley's Chapel in 1881, the last in Oxford in 1951; and those familiar with the history of the intervening years are convinced beyond doubt that the initial call was of God. A similar certainty marked Oxford. We are a committed people, and *we believe the call is of God.*

The question arises—*to what are we committed?* We are not committed to a campaign of a particular kind prompted and promoted by a committee; so to interpret the deep concern of Oxford would indeed be bathos. Moreover, Methodism claims to be a branch of the Holy Catholic Church, and no Church can fulfil its many-sided ministry by a series of extraordinary campaigns labelled to meet the need of the moment. On the other hand, no Church can truly serve its age unless, by the quality of its worship, the reality of its fellowship, and the compelling witness of its life, it is a ceaseless campaign for Christ in this world of needy men.

It is to this that we are committed. Oxford appealed to Methodism—*to be Methodism;* but the kind of Methodism God can use, freed from the timidities of self-preservation, aflame with evangelical passion and power, and true to those emphases which are the most precious things in our heritage.

Altogether apart from its primary purpose, nothing else could so clearly manifest the unity of the Methodist people, nothing could render greater service to a distracted and divided world, and nothing could make a richer contribution to the Church Universal, than a Methodism responsive to this call.

It was no accident that linked the Oxford call with Wesley Day, both

in the year of preparation and in the year of action, or that in 1953 Wesley Day and Whitsunday fall on the same date.

Recall what happened in that golden hour of history. A good man, greatly gifted, utterly sincere, passionately eager to be of service, yet pathetically ineffective, forsook himself and completely trusted God. Before May 24, 1738, John Wesley talked to men about Jesus Christ; after May 24, 1738, Jesus Christ talked to men through John Wesley—a mighty difference. His life was placed at the disposal of the Holy Spirit, to be guided by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit and used to do the Spirit's saving work.

Today Methodism can be found in eighty countries under forty self-governing Conferences touching thirty million people, and in that great worldwide fellowship we have our part and place. In every Conference this call will be heard, and to it an answer must be given. In recent weeks it has been a moving experience to receive letters from Methodism overseas. There is no doubt about their answer—let me sum it up in two sentences: *"We are praying, preparing and planning. We want to be in this."* Do you?

In 1777 John Wesley wrote to Alexander Mather and said, "Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and bring in the Kingdom of God."

There are thirty million of us today in the world. Halve that number. Halve it again. Halve it again, and say that somewhere in world Methodism there are a million people who have seen the vision of God in Christ, and as Wesley himself would say, "The best of all is, God is with us." With every other fear expelled from our hearts, with every other desire subordinate to this, let our prayer be

Enlarge, inflame and fill my heart,
With boundless charity divine,
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like Thine,
And lead them to Thy open side,
The sheep for whom the Shepherd died.

CALL TO EVANGELISM

Issued by the Committee of Fifty of The Methodist Church, U.S.A.

The year ahead will bring dramatic demonstration that "the Methodists are one people in all the world," for 1953 has been designated as Methodism's *year of evangelism.*

The call was issued by the World Methodist Council meeting in Oxford in 1951. Responses are coming from Great Britain, the Continent of Europe, South America, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere in our world parish. It is evident that to our global

Household of Faith the summons to evangelism is both familiar and foremost.

The General Conference meeting in San Francisco reached its high point in the adoption of a noble resolution on "The World Wide Mission of Evangelism." The action made this evangelistic crusade "an integral part of whatever forward movement the General Conference might adopt," and instructed all the Boards and Agencies of the Church to participate in this supreme spiritual undertaking.

The priority of this official "Call to Evangelism" is validated in the conviction of Methodists everywhere that evangelism is the most urgent need of our time; that never have men, as individuals and as nations, faced such desperate circumstances as now confront them, or known so deep a longing for a confident faith with which to meet the challenge of evil forces. The evangelism which will save the present age cannot be shallow. It must root in a personal knowledge of God and in commitment to His will; it must make itself felt in the social processes so that the will and the love of God may be more fully expressed through the agencies of our social order. Such Christian evangelism is based on firm and spiritual foundations long established in Methodist history and belief.

The Committee of Fifty, appointed by the General Board of Evangelism as authorized by the General Conference, transmits this "Call to Evangelism" issued by the World Methodist Council and the Methodist General Conference. We call upon all Methodists—whether laymen, pastors, district superintendents or bishops—to join forces in this World Program of Evangelism to help win the world for Christ. We urge every local church to make intensive evangelistic preparation from world-wide Communion Sunday, October 5, 1952 to the Watch Night Service on December 31, 1952.

Significant evangelistic opportunities are to be found in the Advent Season and the traditional Watch Night Service consecrating the New Year to the glory of God. A Communion Covenant Sunday should be held in every Methodist Church on its first preaching Sunday in January. The Lenten Season and Easter provide rich occasions for evangelistic emphasis. Pentecost Sunday, May 24, which in the year 1953 is also Aldersgate Day, ought to be a notable date in the church year. The 250th anniversary of John Wesley's birth, celebrated on June 17, 1953, may well be used as the basis of an evangelistic program to inspire every member.

The month of October, 1953, should witness the climax of this spiritual movement, with every local church in Methodism promoting the most intensive and fruitful program of evangelism ever undertaken. Throughout all this period, let the radio, television, motion pictures, newspapers, and all known media of communication, especially person-to-person contacts, be used to win men for Christ and His Church.

All of these plans are intended to supplement and strengthen the evangelistic efforts of Areas, Conferences, and local churches as they develop their own programs and spiritual strategy. We millions of Methodists could, under God, change the moral climate of the world in 1953—make it indeed the Year of Our Lord—if in all lands we would yield heart and hand to this high and historic summons to "offer men Christ."

WORLD-WIDE MISSION OF EVANGELISM

The resolution adopted by the General Conference of The Methodist Church, U.S.A., 1952.

WHEREAS the World Methodist Council at its last session in Oxford, England—August 28-September 7, 1951—recommended that world-wide simultaneous evangelistic mission be carried out in all the Methodist Churches of the world in 1953; and

WHEREAS the year 1953 will mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley, the illustrious founder of Methodism,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of The Methodist Church:

1. Cooperate to the fullest extent in this Evangelistic Campaign recommended by the World Methodist Council and urge the participation of all our churches.

2. Identify specifically this world-wide evangelistic program in 1953 with the commemoration of the birth of John Wesley, who said, "The world is my parish."

3. Designate the time from world-wide Communion Sunday, October 5, 1952, to Watch Night Service, December 31, 1952, as a period of intensive evangelistic preparation; and

4. Designate the year 1953 as a period of world-wide evangelism with Pentecost Sunday, which in the year 1953 falls on Aldersgate Sunday, May 24th, as one of the high points of emphasis for the entire period.

5. Instruct the Board of Evangelism to create a committee of fifty with representatives from all boards and agencies of The Methodist Church to inaugurate, implement, and carry out this world-wide evangelistic program.

6. Make this world-wide evangelistic movement an integral part of whatever forward movement the General Conference may adopt for the ensuing quadrennium and instruct the Council of Bishops, the Board of Evangelism, the Board of Missions and Church Extension, the

Woman's Society of Christian Service, the Board of Education, the Board of Lay Activities, the Methodist Publishing House and other appropriate agencies of the church to cooperate in the promotion of this evangelistic campaign.

THE WORLD METHODIST MISSION IN AMERICA

The World Methodist Evangelistic Mission launched by the Oxford Conference has gripped the conscience of the American churches, and the movement is developing in a gratifying way and on a substantial basis. The General Conference reached the highest point of interest and enthusiasm when it unanimously endorsed the call sent out from Oxford and instructed all the boards and agencies of the church to cooperate in the promotion of the campaign. A Committee of Fifty is charged with the direction of the movement, and this body constituted an Administrative Committee for more effective action.

In certain Annual Conferences organized evangelistic movements have already developed. Planning conferences and spiritual life retreats have been and are being held. In the Louisville, Kentucky, area an evangelistic mission was conducted in November under the leadership of Bishop W. T. Watkins; this was participated in by about twelve hundred churches, four hundred thousand persons attended special services, and 9,522 were won for Christ and the Church. Similar missions have been held in other Areas with similar results.

The suggested program of activities as recommended to the churches includes the following observances:

Communion Covenant Sunday—January 4

Festival of Faith—January to Easter

Locating Prospects—January 18-25

Week of Dedication—February 15-22

Lay Visitation and Personal Evangelism—February and March

Membership Training Classes—February and March

Holy Week and Easter—March 25-April 5

Period of Developing Disciples—Easter to Pentecost, April 5-May 25

Festival of the Christian Home—May 10

Aldersgate-Pentecost Anniversary—Sunday, May 24

Program Concerning World Evangelism—through Spring and Summer

Courses on Evangelism—At Institutes and Schools

World Methodist Convocation on Evangelism at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 26-28

Spiritual Life Emphasis—Month of September
World-Wide Communion Sunday—October 4
United Evangelistic Mission—October and November
Layman's Day—Sunday, October 18
Christ Calls Youth—October
Thanksgiving—Thursday, November 26
Christmas and the Advent Season—November 29 to Christmas

NOTES FROM THE WORLD PARISH

What British Methodists Are Doing

By the Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster, Chairman of the Committee on Evangelism of the World Methodist Council, condensed from the METHODIST RECORDER.

Hardly a day now goes by but new evidence reaches Westminster of the preparation in the circuits for the World Methodist Mission. No doubt there are some places where nothing is being done. No doubt there are other places where nothing *much* is being done. No doubt there is wide variety, even in the active places, in the *amount* that is being done. But of the volume, and the spread, and the high seriousness of the undertaking, there can be no doubt whatever.

What are they doing?

1. There seems to be a wide recognition that the spiritual health of the individual leader and member is of primary importance. It would appear that there has been a good deal of heart-searching in Methodism of late. The Holy Spirit has been probing us, and many of us feel the need of deeper probing still.

We cannot give away what we haven't got, and (it is usually conceded) we cannot be the means of lifting others higher than we have been lifted ourselves. What need, then, of a deeper committal and a greater brokenness before God from us all.

2. Quite the most impressive thing in the reports is the proof of increased prayer. Indeed, there is a noble monotony in it. "New" prayer meetings. "More" prayer meetings. "Eight-day" prayer meetings. "Early morning" prayer meetings. Hardly a report fails to speak of the growing volume of prayer.

Now, nothing could be lovelier than this. No revivals have come without prayer. Revivals have come without great leaders—though they usually have them. Revivals have come without a new burst of heavenly song—though not commonly (John Wesley had his Charles, and Moody his Sankey). But no revival came without a prelude of widespread,

continuous, united, and beseeching prayer.

3. A richer and more purposeful fellowship is being enjoyed. The reports make it clear that our people are getting together the more eagerly because there is something to do.

Members are meeting to study the faith. An increasing number of our people realise that they do not know their faith. Christianity has been a mass of vague sentiment to them. They are actually asking in many places for doctrinal instruction.

Others are meeting in what can only be called "Schools of Evangelism." In some, it is personal evangelism; in others, open-air evangelism; in most, it is visitation evangelism. None of the Twelve Ways of Evangelism appears to be receiving more notice than visitation evangelism. It can safely be predicted, so far as England is concerned, that many hundreds of thousands of homes will be visited in 1953 with an affectionate invitation to the church.

4. Some circuits are having, in 1953, a mission of the traditional type in every place in the circuit. It is a week's mission in most—usually with two week ends. The ministers and local preachers are doing it. In some wide circuits it looks an heroic undertaking, and those who must bear the chief burden will need many prayers. If the converts won in the early missions are put to work in the later ones, it may snowball into something quite impressive.

5. Guest Services and Parents' Association Services are getting pleasantly common. Some of our correspondents say that it is a major mistake only to get the parents to church on Sunday school anniversary day and similar occasions when the children "are in the midst." Parents are easier to get on those occasions but, if they only come then and hear an address mainly directed to children, they will assume that the staple of Christian preaching is rather juvenile. So the aim is to get them on special evenings (quarterly and then monthly) when the children are *not* there.

Some circuits are swinging their whole evangelical resources into a new building area on the outskirts of their town; some preachers' meetings are planning a consecutive series of teaching sermons; in one area our people are planning to burst in a big way into the press.

The local literature already produced is uneven but never unworthy. Some of it is splendidly done. Literature is being produced at headquarters, but it is fine to see hundreds of our circuits outrunning the commendations of Westminster and doing their own job in their own way.

The vast enterprise is afoot. The country which cradled Methodism will not play an unworthy part in the global advance.

Encouraging Signs in Britain

By the Rev. Colin A. Roberts, President of the British Methodist Conference, in the METHODIST RECORDER.

What is happening in Methodism today and how are our people responding to the Oxford Call? Having enjoyed the President's privilege of addressing crowded gatherings almost daily for the last two months, and listening to ministers and laymen in more than a dozen conferences, I am convinced that:—

(1) There is a much wider knowledge of the inwardness of the Oxford Call than many have assumed. What has been written and said during the past twelve months has not been in vain, and I have yet to hear of a circuit in which *nothing* has been done, though in some circuits it is little, and in others much.

(2) There is a growing spirit of expectation, but with it a quickened sense of the need for spiritual renewal.

(3) There is a widespread revival of prayer. *I believe there is more corporate prayer in Methodism today than for many years past.* This is the most hopeful sign of the times, for a praying people alone can discover God's will and be enabled to do it.

An awareness of the task to which we are committed, an eager expectation to share in it, and a conscious dependence upon God —if these three things find expression in every circuit we can go forward in glad confidence.

Evangelism Planned in Europe

Plans for the participation of the Churches of Continental Europe in the Methodist World Mission of Evangelism were formed in the summer of 1952 at a conference held at the Theological Seminary at Frankfurt-on-Main in Germany. The Rev. E. Benson Perkins, a Secretary of the World Methodist Council, and the Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster, Chairman of the Committee on Evangelism, participated in the meeting.

Thirty-five representatives from Great Britain, Germany, Finland, Austria, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland and France were present. Said a report from the scene: "But even as we thrilled to see one another, we grieved to remember those who should have been present and could not be—representatives of Methodism beyond the Iron Curtain. One of the most deeply moving sessions of the whole conference was that devoted to prayers of unity and intercession for our brethren in Eastern Europe."

The reports indicated that the churches in all the countries were

preparing for the 1953 evangelistic campaign, and that it was already under way in Belgium, Spain, Germany and other places. One of the resolutions declared: "The conference hears with pleasure of a response already made to the Oxford Call that 1953 should be a year of evangelistic enterprise throughout World Methodism, and solemnly commits itself to the task in the lands from which it has been drawn."

A statement adopted for the guidance of the churches contained the following:

"The Conference recognises the wide variety of circumstances in which European Methodism exists. Here and there it has the opportunities that attach to a strong organisation, but frequently it is a minority movement, serving a scattered membership, with limited human resources. In some territories it has complete freedom of action, but more often it is seriously hindered by legal or political restrictions, or by the claims of dominant State Churches.

"Conscious of these things, the Conference nevertheless makes the following affirmations: (a) The bringing of the individual to a personal choice of Christ remains the first aim of all Methodist activity. (b) Every Methodist minister and layman has a responsible part in this mission, though each will use the methods for which he is personally equipped. (c) The language and assumptions of Wesley's day, powerful in their time, do not meet the needs of the twentieth-century materialist. It is vital, therefore, that those approaching modern man should be aware of his social and mental setting. (d) Different techniques have shown themselves effective under God for the winning of converts. Preaching or team-witness may be appropriate in one community; house-to-house evangelism or religious drama or films may be preferable in another. (e) No convert should finally be outside the fellowship of the worshipping Church. Hence, what begins as a challenge to personal witness continues as a challenge to a more vital corporate life in our societies, in which the newly-won believer may grow to full Christian manhood."

The Campaign in Australia

The World Methodist Evangelistic Mission has been organized and is gaining impetus among the churches of Australia, according to reports from Methodist leaders there. A year of preparation has been observed and from April to September, 1953, a great "Mission to the Nation" will be carried out. This will be "the greatest attempt ever made by Australian Methodism to carry the Christian Message to every part of the continent."

The focal point of the Mission will be a series of meetings covering ten-day periods in capital cities

of each state in the Commonwealth and in the main provincial centers. The first will be held in Perth in April, and then Adelaide in May, Hobart in June, Brisbane and Canberra in July, Melbourne in August, and Sydney in September. A weekly radio feature will be presented throughout Australia. The aim will be to present the challenge of the Christian faith, and in dramatic form to tell the story of what the Methodist Church is doing. Prominent Church leaders will be heard and there will be wide use of the press, and a poster campaign.

A book is to be prepared which will tell the contribution of Methodism to the country, and the church's pronouncements on social issues will be featured. The message will therefore be both personal and social in its application.

The leader of the campaign will be the Rev. Alan Walker, superintendent of the Waverly Methodist Mission, Sydney. He has had wide experience in conducting special missions both in Australia and abroad. In 1950 he conducted a Mission for the Methodist Church of New Zealand. Last year he visited a number of American universities conducting Christian missions. He was a delegate of the Methodist Church of Australia to the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches. He will direct the Mission and be the main speaker in capital-city missions and undertake extensive evangelism across the country. In addition a panel of leaders selected from the Australian ministry will visit centers of population not included in his itinerary.

Jamaica

Methodists in Jamaica are preparing to take their place in the World Methodist Mission of evangelism during 1953. A suggestion has come that may lead to the sending of a representative of the World Methodist Council from the United States to cooperate in a preaching mission there if desired by the Jamaican Methodists.

The World Mission in New Zealand

By the Rev. L. R. M. Gilmore

Plans for the 1953 World Mission of Evangelism were submitted to all District Synods and placed before the General Conference. The Spiritual Advance Committee suggests separate Teaching and Evangelistic Missions in all Circuits—the former in June or July, the latter about September or October. A special preparation course at Trinity Theological College, Auckland, for representative

ministers from all districts is proposed early in the year. Later, each representative will carry inspiration of this central gathering to the March Ministerial Synod in his own district.

It is further proposed that the season of Lent be used to call our people to special spiritual discipline and prayer. As far as possible it is desired that each local minister shall be in his Circuit during the course of the Mission in his area. These Missions are not intended to replace, but to supplement the work of Visitation Evangelism, which, it must be confessed, is lagging in some districts, though flourishing in others.

The 1952 President of Conference, the Rev. G. I. Laurenson, has been reappointed Crusade Director. During his year of office, he was away for some time attending the Jubilee Celebrations of Methodist Mission work in the Solomon Islands and also visiting our Australian Church. Reporting on his journey, Mr. Laurenson writes: "Modern conditions are continuing to create a community of young parents very loosely connected with the Church. Our Australian Church is facing exactly the same problem, and we must constantly work out to that marginal group, facing them with the challenge of personal faith and family worship."

How-Great-A-Flame Campaign in South Africa

By the Rev. L. A. Hewson

For more than a generation, the Methodist Church of South Africa has reported an increase of about 10,000 members each year, and the total now stands at 515,937. This is largely due to sustained evangelistic efforts principally among our African members, and may be described as a mass movement in slow motion.

Among our European members, there has been a steady growth of evangelistic activity in the post-war period. Youth Camps have proved a most successful method of winning young people for Christ and His Church. At the 1949 Conference, Rev. Dr. J. B. Webb made Evangelism the theme of his addresses, and even before Oxford 1951 with its call to World Methodism, there had been most rewarding campaigns in several districts. In these, the lead was usually taken by ministers belonging to "F.K." (The Fellowship of the Kingdom)

With the impetus of Oxford 1951, affirmed in South Africa at the Bloemfontein Conference of the same year, rapid development of the campaigns took place, and the name "How Great a Flame" given to the Campaign in the Grahamstown District, has been widely used elsewhere.

The Rev. A. E. F. Garrett, then President of Conference, exercised a great influence both as Chairman of the Grahamstown District, and through a monthly pastoral letter distributed through the Book Room in kindling and spreading the flame of "a wise and winsome evangelism." Prominent as a leader of lay and ministerial teams of witness has been Rev. Jack Cook of Port Elizabeth.

In all seven Districts which constitute the Methodist Church of South Africa, this Year of Preparation has shown wonderful results, and plans adapted to the special circumstances of each district have been made for the years which lie ahead.

The Rev. E. Gordon Rupp, lecturer in modern Church history in the University of Cambridge, visited South Africa last summer and gave a great impetus to the Methodist World Mission.

World Wesleyan Convocation

In connection with the World Methodist Evangelistic Campaign in the United States, a World Convocation in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley will be held at Philadelphia, June 26-28, 1953. It is expected that representatives of Methodism in various parts of the world will be present. The districts of the Church in the United States are expected to be represented by about 4000 appointed delegates.

While the program has not taken final form it is expected to deal primarily with evangelism. Groups of preachers, laymen, and Methodist youth will discuss the evangelistic challenge. One session will be devoted to the Methodist ecumenical emphasis and another to "the Holy Spirit and the Living Christ." One evening will be devoted to the music of the Wesley movement, and there will be a pilgrimage to old St. George's Church, Independence Hall, Valley Forge, and other points of historical interest in and near Philadelphia.

The convocation will reach its climax in a great anniversary service at Franklin Field on Sunday afternoon, June 28, at which it is hoped that President Dwight D. Eisenhower will deliver the principal address.

It is expected that British Methodism will be represented by the Vice-President of the World Methodist Council, Dr. Harold Roberts, the Joint Secretary, the Rev. E. Benson Perkins, the Vice-President of the Conference, Dr. Dorothy Farrar, and Dr. Maldwyn Edwards.

Southeastern Wesleyan Commemoration at Lake Junaluska, U.S.A.

A Southeastern Convocation in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley will be held at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, U.S.A., July 2-5, 1953, jointly sponsored by the World Methodist Council and the Association of Methodist Historical Societies.

In connection with this event there will be meetings of the Executive and Finance Committees, U.S.A., of the World Methodist Council. One feature of the occasion will be an exhibit of Wesleyana arranged by the Historical Association.

Among the speakers and presiding officers will be Bishop Ivan Lee Holt, Bishop Paul N. Garber, Dr. Oscar T. Olson, Mr. Edwin L. Jones, the Hon. Charles C. Parlin, the Rev. E. Benson Perkins, Dr. Dorothy Farrar, Dr. Harold Roberts, Dr. Maldwyn Edwards, Bishop Arthur J. Moore, Bishop Gerald Kennedy and others, including a member of the Cabinet of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

On the evening of July 4th there will be a Methodist Hymn Festival at which the hymns of the Wesleys will be featured.

The last day of this convocation will be the first day of the annual Camp Meeting sponsored by the Board of Evangelism as a part of the World Methodist Evangelistic Mission.

Aldersgate Broadcast

The Rev. E. Benson Perkins, one of the Secretaries of the World Methodist Council, has announced an Aldersgate observance on the evening of May 24, 1953, to be held in the New Room at Bristol, England, the first and oldest Methodist center in the world. The program is expected to feature the music of the Wesleys and an address by the Rev. Dr. Eric W. Baker, Secretary of the British Methodist Conference. The whole program will be broadcast by the British Broadcasting Company.

Arrangements are being made to receive this broadcast in the United States, both direct and by transcriptions, through the facilities of the Radio and Film Commission and the Radio Committee of the Southeastern and South Central Jurisdictional Councils. Transcriptions for radio stations and churches may be secured by writing to Rev. James W. Sells, Wesley Memorial Building, Atlanta, Georgia.

Journal of Francis Asbury

The International Methodist Historical Society and the World Methodist Council at the Oxford Conference in 1951 adopted as a joint project the preparation and publication of an annotated edition of the *Journal* of Bishop Francis Asbury. Active work on this project has been started by the Association of Methodist Historical Societies, U.S.A.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Association in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in November, 1952, an editorial committee was named to direct the complicated work of editing the *Journal.* That committee is composed of the following persons: Bishop Paul N. Garber, of Richmond, Virginia, former professor of church history and Dean of the Divinity School of Duke University; Dr. Elmer T. Clark, Secretary of the World Methodist Council and Executive Secretary of the American Association of Methodist Historical Societies; Dr. Jacob S. Payton, Washington correspondent of the *Christian Advocate;* Dr. Lester A. Welliver, President of the Westminster Theological Seminary and President of the Historical Society of the Northeastern Jurisdiction; Dr. J. Manning Potts, Editor of *The Upper Room.*

World Parish

The American Association of Methodist Historical Societies and the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council, U.S.A. have reached an agreement for continuing the publication of "World Parish" on a joint basis. It is expected that eight issues will be published annually. Half of these will be devoted to ecumenical Methodist matters and half of them will publish American Methodist historical materials. Dr. Jacob S. Payton will be associated with the Secretary as editor of matters relating to American Methodist history.

Bishop Holt on World Tour

Bishop Ivan Lee Holt, President of the World Methodist Council accompanied by Mrs. Holt, left New York on December 3, for a round-the-world tour in the course of which he will visit members of the various Sections of the Council and other Methodists in many parts of the world. In London he conferred with members of the Executive Committee with reference to dates and places for Com-

mittee meetings and other matters of interest.

Bishop Holt attended the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, of which he is a member, at Delhi, India, during the latter part of December. While there he arranged a meeting of the members of Section V and conferred with Methodist leaders with reference to the observance of the Centennial of Methodism's entrance into India in 1956. From Delhi his tour included Burma, Siam, Malaya, China (Hongkong), Japan, and Hawaii.

Salisbury in America

Mr. Frank O. Salisbury, famous British artist, has recently visited the United States and met briefly with the American Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council in Chicago. Mr. Salisbury has presented one of his notable portraits of John Wesley to the American Secretary of the Council, and it is being held as a trust for all the Methodists of the United States. It has been exhibited before certain Methodist bodies and further exhibitions are being planned. Fine reproductions are to be produced and made available to Methodist homes and churches.

Film on the Life of Wesley

The Radio and Film Commission of The Methodist Church, U.S.A., is producing a fifty-five minute motion picture film in color on the life of John Wesley, emphasizing his Aldersgate experience and evangelistic preaching. The photography is being done in England by the J. Arthur Rank Organization.

The film is expected to be released to the churches in the autumn of 1953. The Radio and Film Commission raised a special fund of around $150,000 for the production of this film. A large number of local Methodist churches made contributions and these will have the use of the film for pre-release showings, after which it will be released to all churches and the general public through the facilities of The Methodist Publishing House.

Notable Leaders Passed Away

Since the Oxford Conference World Methodism has suffered the loss of some of its outstanding leaders in Great Britain and on the Continent of Europe.

Dr. Wilbert F. Howard, Honor-

ary President of the World Methodist Council, Dr. Duncan Coomer, Treasurer, and Bishop J. W. E. Sommer of Germany, a member of Section XII, were among them. Death has also taken Mr. F. D. Wiseman, managing editor of *The Methodist Recorder*, strong supporter of the Council, though not an actual member.

Work of the Committees

Activities of the Standing Committees of the World Methodist Council were reviewed by the Executive Committee, U.S.A., at its meeting in Chicago in November. Since the committees as now constituted are too large and widely separated for effective action, it was suggested that each constitute a sub-committee of three members, which, with the President and Secretary of the Council, should exercise the functions of the whole so far as the United States is concerned.

The Committee on Faith and Order reported that Bishop Holt, Dr. Olson and Professor Cannon attended the conference on Faith and Order at Lund, Sweden, as our representatives, and other American Methodists were also present. The American co-chairman of the Theological Section has been in correspondence with other members with a view to securing information on current Methodist theological publications. This section is studying the possibility of a meeting of American Methodist teachers of theology and the publication of some articles on the progress of Methodist theological thought. It is hoped that a meeting of theologians may be held next summer. The American delegates at Lund have issued a statement on the proposed theme of the next meeting of the World Council of Churches. The statement is published elsewhere in this bulletin.

The Committee on Woman's Work is studying the relationship of the World Federation of Methodist Women to the Methodist World Council. It has been suggested that the 1956 meeting of the World Federation should discuss the matter of becoming a part of the Committee on Woman's Work.

The Committee on Exchange of Preachers arranged eight exchanges in 1952 and will arrange several others in 1953. Up to the present time it has accepted only those who have applied, but it feels that it should now begin the selection of exchange preachers on its own initiative. Exchanges have been confined to the United States and Great Britain, but it is expected that preachers from Germany and South Africa will come to America next spring, and the committee hopes that these may be used in the evangelistic campaign in this country. A booklet of information has been published for the committee and a certificate of accreditization has been printed. A sub-committee of the American section met in January to pass on exchange ministers for 1953.

Tour to Great Britain for the Wesley Commemoration

The Quarter-Millennial commemoration of the birth of John Wesley will be observed in the spring of 1953 by the Methodists of many nations. One of the principal events will be an Aldersgate program at Bristol, England, on May 24th. This will be in the "New Room in the Horse Fair," the first and oldest Methodist building in the world.

Numerous American Methodists desire to visit Great Britain during this year, but arrangements are difficult because the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II has absorbed all facilities. Under the auspices of the World Methodist Council, however, a party is planning to sail on April 29th and return on June 11th. Its members will attend the Bristol Commemoration, visit numerous Methodist historical shrines, and return before the Wesley commemorative convocations which will be held in America late in June and early in July.

Places on this tour are limited because of the travel congestion. Interested persons should write immediately for information to Dr. Elmer T. Clark, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, or to Methodist Tours, c/o Thos. Cook & Son, 587 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, New York.

Meetings Scheduled

The American Executive and Finance Committees of the World Methodist Council will meet at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, July 2-4, 1953. Representatives of British Methodism also will attend.

The Association of Methodist Historical Societies will meet at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, July 3, 1953. A Wesley Tea and an exhibit of Wesleyana will be featured.

The Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council will meet at Birmingham, England, July 22-25, 1953. Members will attend special services marking the closing session of the British Conferences and will speak in various Methodist churches on July 26th. On July 27th there will be a pilgrimage to historical spots connected with the early life of Frances Asbury and a visit to Stratford-on-Avon, where a performance at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre will be attended.

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And the Affiliated Methodist Historical Societies

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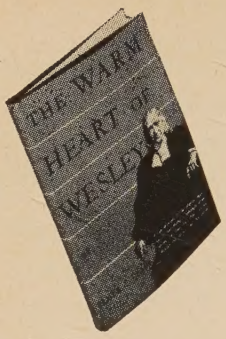

For the Observance of *Aldersgate Sunday*

May 24, 1953

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